"The beaten generation, the beaten generation
Reared on a diet of prejudice and misinformation
The beaten generation, the beaten generation
Open your eyes, open your imagination"
Matt Johnson, The The, 1989

*ScrutiNews: A Proposal

Version 1.0.1
John Durrant, 25th February 2018

"Holding content creators accountable through cryptocurrency empowered scrutiny…"

- OR -

"Pulling journalism and online debate out of the gutter to elevate public discourse so collectively
we make better decisions for the world we inhabit…"

Summary:

This is a proposal to create a news aggregation platform, starting with a prototype for
cryptocurrency news, where articles are filtered and scrutinised to weed out false claims and
prejudice, giving the reader a version of events they can trust. This proposal speculates on how a
news scrutiny platform could be viable, given currently available technologies and market
sentiment, and how the project could be funded and fuelled by a cryptocurrency ICO (Initial Coin
Offering).

*ScrutiNews is a working title. News will be the first target for scrutiny, but ultimately the tools and methodologies created
for ScrutiNews could be applied to any kind of content. ScrutiNews will suffice until someone thinks of a better name.

Purpose, Audience, and Disclaimers:

Purpose:

The purpose of this document is to garner interest and support from people who wish to contribute to the software development and business launch of the proposed 'ScrutiNews' project.

Intended Audience:

This proposal will be shared with a range of people whom I feel would have something to contribute, and I think might be interested in the concept.

From Order to Chaos:

I'll face the inevitable, but necessary, discomfort of moving from order to chaos as I move from the nicely ordered act of putting initial thoughts down on paper, to inviting opinion, critique, and feedback of others, but without this step, the project will go nowhere...

Confidentiality:

Please refrain from sharing this document without the explicit permission of the author. Ultimately the project will be conducted with maximum openness and transparency, but in the short-term, prior to an agreed plan to execute on the ideas herein, I insist on discretion in all matters relating to this proposal.

Disclaimer:

Nothing within this document constitutes a commitment or any promise of a legal nature, it is purely to gauge interest and garner support. It is not intended as a polished business document, sloppy thinking, typos, or grammatical quirks may lurk here. Should interest and support be sufficient, a more formal association of collaborators will be created with clear terms of engagement.

Copyright:

Table of Contents

1. Project Initiation:

This is a project in multiple stages, starting with a collaboration to build a prototype.

I want to build the platform 'ScrutiNews', a news aggregator providing real-time news updates from multiple sources which are scrutinised and curated by specially trained 'Scrutineers' to weed out unreliable 'fake' reports and give context and analysis to incoming news feeds.

The first implementation of ScrutiNews will be the *world's best CryptoAsset news aggregator, taking advantage of the current high levels of interest in this emerging field, and the copious amounts of bad reporting. Later implementations will extend the ScrutiNews platform to encompass other specialist industry news aggregation and curation. ScrutiNews will culminate in providing scrutiny, analysis and curation of mass media news, a field rife with misinformation and a chance to do something worthwhile for the progress of humanity. Early adopters of cryptocurrency are disproportionately the kind of people who sceptically question the authority of the mass media, and who will open-mindedly embrace the pursuit of truth and clarity in the public discourse.

*Currently the 'World's best CryptoAsset news aggregator' seems to be https://cryptopanic.com- this has some nice features, but could be improved upon. It has some human curation via voting, but this can be a crude tool, and some sources on the site are unreliable.

Why?
When different people encounter a news article, each will form a different viewpoint, according to their 'reality tunnels', their unique way of experiencing the world. Their personal baggage of what they pay attention to, their filters, their prejudices, their lack of knowledge etc. ScrutiNews is a platform with tools and methodologies to scrutinise a news item, or any piece of content, distil it to its core elements, assess the accuracy and logic in its arguments and conclusions, and try to understand the whole spectrum of possible perspectives from which the item may be viewed.

The Internet gives us real-time information about world events, but information is in chaos, delivered to us by bad journalism, amplified by social media, distorting the truth and people's opinions. We've become polarised, entrenched in our prejudices, and at each other's throats due to the faulty logic and ungrounded arguments in today's discourse. This is clearly evidenced by reader comments on articles, call in radio shows, and social media posts.

For the sake of my children and the world at large, this is the most purposeful and heroic challenge I can think of giving myself, to inspire the creation of a means to apply rational scrutiny to the streams of information on current affairs, bringing order from chaos, to discern good journalism from bad, truth from misinformation and rumour, elevating the discourse to foster better solutions to the problems of the world.

This is a proposal for a collaborative project to build a News Scrutiny platform utilising a cryptocurrency micro-payments token to create an internal system of payments and rewards for participants. Providing real-time news updates, exposing bad journalism, celebrating good journalism, understanding the spectrum of perspectives, fact finding, and bringing clarity...

It is said that we're living in a 'post-truth era' where politicians and mass-media pick whatever 'facts' suit their agenda. And there are still repressive regimes in the world where information is censored and manipulated to an Orwellian extent. Intelligent people are sick of this, let's give them something better.

2. Proposal Process:

Slack: A slack 'workgroup' has been created to evaluate this proposal, please request an invite if you wish to be involved in these early discussions. The address is: https://scrutinews.slack.com/

a) Gauge Interest:

- I will initially share this proposal amongst a few friends and colleagues whom I think would have a high-level interest in what I'm trying to achieve and whom I trust to give their honest and insightful feedback on the project proposal.

b) Technical Implementation Ideas:

- Next, I will consult with technical colleagues to generate ideas on implementation details, and attempt to involve a group of core developers interested in forming a team to participate in the project.

c) Governance and Principles:

- Make agreements amongst ourselves on how we'll tackle the project, identifying additional resources needed, determine who does what, how contributions are tracked, how we do governance.

d) Form a Strategy and Roadmap:

- Solidify ideas on a business and revenue generation, funding, and think about a viable roadmap

e) White Paper:

- Taking this proposal as the foundation for creating a formal white paper to guide our work and our philosophy.

f) Make a Start:

- Build a fancy website to support the project and the ICO, and begin work on the prototype and a mini-application to track people's contributions.

Any of the above may change, remember this is just a proposal...

3. Project Description:

Coverage of news events, whether public interest or industry specific subjects, has become a minefield of unverified facts, sensationalism, bias, disinformation, fake news, and deliberately misleading clickbait headlines. This phenomenon occurs in both traditional news media and social media. Behind each headline there is usually an agenda. Someone is trying to influence your emotions and opinions, or manipulate you into clicking on an ad.

ScrutiNews is a news aggregator, utilising a cryptocurrency micro-payments token to incentivise people to scrutinise and curate news feeds from multiple sources, discerning fact from fiction, highlighting bias and sensationalism, providing context and concise summaries, all to help the reader to keep abreast of current events from mainstream news and specialised industry news. The best insights are filtered from the nonsense.

Readers will find trustable news summaries and critiques, relevant to their own interests, gaining timely and accurate insight and understanding. Those scrutinising and curating the news will be rewarded for their efforts based on the quality of their work, as acknowledged by the readers.

Potential ScrutiNews use cases are described below, both those of mass public appeal and those in more industry specific or special interest fields.

3.1 Use Case 1 - Traditional News Media and Social Media:

Over the last decade or so, there seems to have been increasing awareness amongst ordinary people of the inherent biases in reports from national news channels, newspapers, and associated websites. Mainstream media is often accused of slavishly repeating government PR, without question or scrutiny. Trust in mass media varies over time and by country, but a significant proportion of people are sceptical and distrustful of the quality and truthfulness of reporting. Some sources are more reliable than others of course, and some people are better at navigating to the truth than others. However, traditional media sources still hold much power to manipulate and cajole opinion, and many people are left bemused and confused by what is actually going on in the world.

Social media responds to the inherent ambiguities within traditional news media in a variety of ways. There are noble efforts to provide critique, facts, evidence, and truth, but there is also the amplification of prejudices. People gravitate to posts which confirm their biases, and become more deeply entrenched in their polarised positions. The wide accessibility of social media makes

it prone to manipulation by malevolent actors, where fictions can be presented as truth in a believable way. The 'Fake News' phenomenon has arguably made some people a little more critical and sceptical of social media stories, however there are many who remain hoodwinked. Presented with such an overwhelming spectrum of 'information' many people are left bewildered and retreat to their familiar prejudices, rather than struggling to seek the truth.

3.2 Use Case 2 - Industry Specific & Special Interest News:

The business sector is rife with propaganda and general marketing 'bollocks'. News outlets do not want to risk their advertising revenues by being too negative towards companies who advertise with them. Companies will court journalists and lavish them with treats in return for favourable editorials. They'll launch all kinds of gimmicks for those vital column inches. Misreporting and deliberate malevolence are just as insidious within Industry and Specialist news spheres as in the mainstream. People are making business, investment, and political decisions on bogus and manipulated news reports. Industry and specialist news reports often tend to bubble up to the mainstream news, so mass media becomes an echo chamber, a regurgitation of bullshit. The need to strive for truth and reason in Industry and Special Interest news is just as important as in the mainstream news arena.

The first 'Industry News' sector we will use for prototyping the ScruitiNews platform will be the CryptoAssets domain, as described in the next section. This will be a way of testing the platform with active tribe of users from whom we could expect both support and useful criticism so that refinements can be made before tackling the mass market.

3.3 CryptoAssets - Initial Use Case for the ScrutiNews Platform:

Industry News for CryptoAssets:
Anyone who has followed the Cryptocurrency domain since the birth of Bitcoin will have seen countless unbalanced fearmongering articles from mainstream media countered by wildly exuberant claims from enthusiasts, leaving everyone clamouring for a sense of reality between the nonsense. Fake news has been spread to manipulate markets resulting in bouts of FOMO and FUD as panic within the crypto investor herds spreads like wildfire.

A good example of the disinformation and shockingly poor journalism around Bitcoin, where the technology is presented in a series of one-sided slurs, is at https://99bitcoins.com/bitcoinobituaries/, a collection of articles declaring the death of Bitcoin since it's inception in 2009. Of course there is a barrage of over-inflated journalistic reports on the

other side of the spectrum, the point of ScrutiNews is to seek an honest evaluation based on evidence and coherent argumentation.

As a CryptoAsset enthusiast, I can keep up to date with breaking CryptoAsset news to help me to better understand this fascinating and fast evolving domain, and make more timely and informed decisions when trading in Cryptoassets. As a crypto 'Scrutineer', I get paid for filtering facts, anomalies, and prejudices from crypto news bulletins, adding value to readers.

CryptoAsset Product Vision:

The aim will be to create a platform, on which the CryptoAssets news aggregator will be the first implementation.
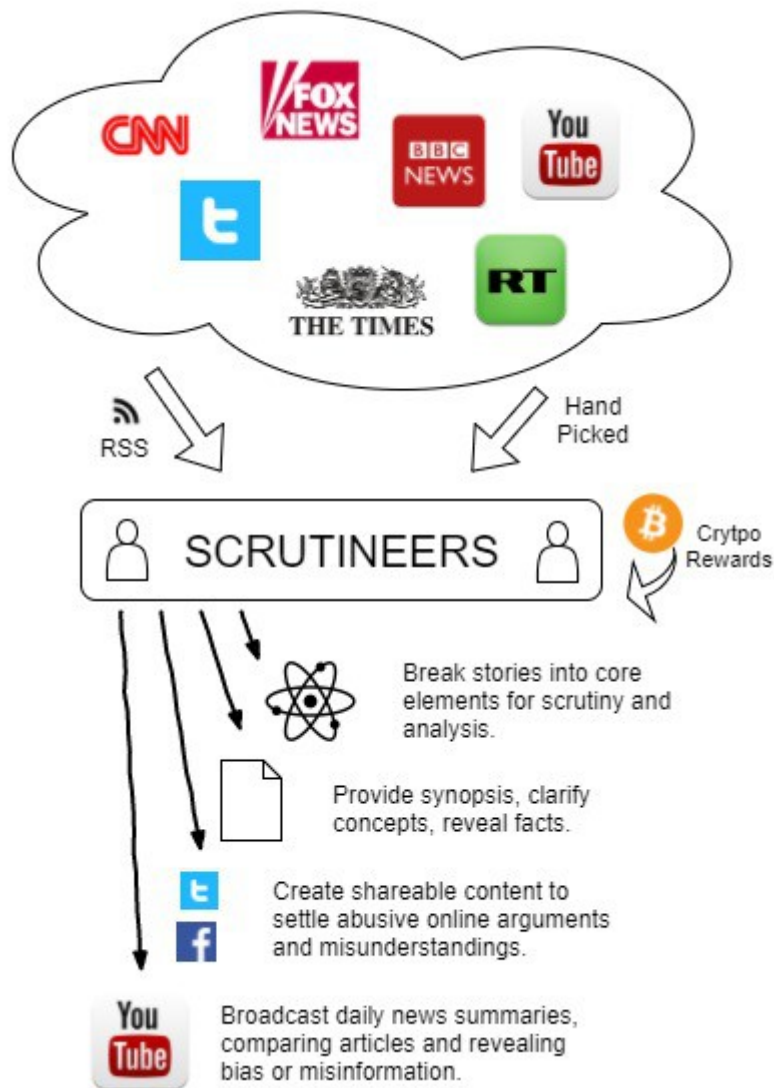
- Real-time news updates, sourced from news feeds, social media feeds, and user contributed feeds

- Use of a cryptocurrency micro-payments token to create an internal economic system of payments, rewards, and incentives for quality of analysis and contributions

- Feeds scrutinised and rated for trustworthiness

- Multiple feeds consolidated into single stories, making the day's events easily digestible

- Stories linked to specific CryptoAssets

- User comments, voting and rewards, including predicted Cryptoasset price impact analysis

- Customisable alerts and notifications

- Resources, journalistic summaries, and 'Pearls of Wisdom' to aid understanding.

Delivery of the 'First Use Case':

- Assemble a credible team

- Build a basic application to track contributors inputs via a simple Ethereum Smart Contract.

- Build the platform prototype

- Hold a Token Generation Event (E.g. ICO initial Coin Offering), including roadmap, business plan, and whitepaper.

- Launch the first use case, ScrutiNews for CryptoAssets

- Promote like hell, and generate a revenue stream.

4. How. Platform and Features:

The diagram below depicts the main activities and workflow of the proposed ScrutiNews platform:

The diagram above depicts a basic workflow within the ScrutiNews platform. We take feed inputs via RSS (Really Simple Syndication) and hand picked news items. Scrutineers break them down into core elements so they can be evaluated, analysed, and simplified in ways that are meaningful to a variation of personal tastes. An especially created cryptocurrency micro-payments token is used to incentivise the Scrutineers and to take payments to support the revenue model (The Bitcoin icon was used above, but in actuality there would be something like ScrutiCoin)

The sections below elaborate on this basic diagram:

4.1 News Sourcing:

Collect News from Various Feed Sources:
The vast majority of news oriented websites provide RSS (Really Simple Syndication) feeds. RSS has been around in various forms since the 90s and provides information in a computer readable format (XML) so that online content from one website can be syndicated to another website. In addition to news sites is also possible to create RSS feeds from Blogs, YouTube and Twitter channels.

a) We automatically collect feeds from designated news sources: We maintain a Database of sources, and categorise those sources so they can be managed and channelled based on user interest.

b) User added feeds: A user suggests an ad-hoc article or other content for inclusion in the pot of aggregated content.

4.2 Feed Screening:

Grouping Common Feed Articles into Single 'Story Collections':
When a new article is supplied via a feed, ScrutiNews needs to decide whether this is a completely new story for today, or whether we have already covered the story from an alternative source.

Automated Feed Screening:
Use keywords and intelligent algorithms to match incoming feeds to pre-existing stories of the day, providing a suggested pick list for (b) below.

Human Feed Screening:
Use human judgement to determine the relevance and value of the feed and link it to any pre-existing stories of the day based on a suggested list produced from (a) above.

- Guest Users will be periodically prompted to do Feed Screening in order to avoid being locked out. They provide a quick screening service taking up several seconds in return for continued access. A cookie will be placed on their device to allow us to rate their efforts and determine whether they are being genuine.

- Logged-in Users can voluntarily agree to do Feed Screening, setting a threshold for how many they do, in return for cryptocurrency micro-payments.

This will enable readers to view a single story container, which is collection of individual articles reporting on the single story.

4.3 Scrutineers:

Applying Scrutiny, Analysis, Perspectives, Clarity, and Editorial Synopsis to 'Story Collections':
A significant difference between ScrutiNews and other RSS Feed Readers, is the means to provide reliable analysis so a user can quickly gain a balanced insight into a story without trawling through unreliable and biased articles.

a) Scrutineers are Paid Via Cryptocurrency Micro-payments Token to Scrutinise Content:
Many people spend a lot of time reading news articles and commenting about them on social media. If they signed up to our platform to be a Scrutineer they would have access to training resources to sharpen their critical thinking with a methodology and tools to dissect content and improve their analytical skills. They will be paid for their efforts via a cryptocurrency micro-payments token.

ScrutiNews will include tools to enable Scrutineers to collaborate on breaking down an article to its core elements upon which to provide scrutiny and analysis.

Scrutineers will Collaborate to:

- Break a feed article down to its core elements

- Identify premises and conclusions, whether implicit or explicit

- Vote on premises for their factual validity

- Identify sources and assess their credibility

- Identify fallacious arguments and bias

- Look for conflicts of interest and hidden agendas

- Identify context, and missing context

- Cut through rhetoric, and tease out the crux of the message

- Identify exaggeration and sensationalism

Scrutiny Methodology:
The development of a methodology to scrutinise content will be an ever-evolving practice, building, tweaking, learning and refining the methodology as a community. There will be pros and cons with different approaches, some will be clear and easy to apply, without much debate, other

approaches may be contentious or ambiguous. Our methodology will be transparent, and itself open to scrutiny.

Scrutineer Rewards:

Users will vote on the scrutiny provided, which will partly determine how much a Scrutineer is paid for their work. A Scrutineer can improve their weighted potential earnings by regularly attending 'Scrutineer University', a range of online course designed in collaboration with experts in critical thinking to help with identifying, categorising and analysing fallacious reporting. For example, we could offer online tests where people assess real content, video clips or text, to identify Logical Fallacies or Bias (The great President Donald Trump alone would provide ample material to work with - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w2CxDu7jiyE).

4.4 Added Features:

Below are some ideas to be added to the platform as part of a potential roadmap:

Ratings for Journalists, and Media Publications:

Through the scrutiny process, we will begin to be able to rate individual journalists and whole publications by a number of metrics. We will be unveiling the bad and celebrating the good, exposing trends in their bias along the spectrum of viewpoints (E.g. Politically left or right leaning - or more appropriate categorisations).

Guides to Argumentation:

Within the platform there will be guides for all users in the 'art of argumentation', so that users become adept at spotting well constructed arguments from bad and deliberately manipulative arguments. Users will be able to tag content to call out abuses of argumentation strategy (e.g. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_fallacies) and recognising where cognitive bias may be be a factor (e.g. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_cognitive_biases). When content is tagged, others will be able to vote on the accuracy and applicability of the tag. Just watch this rhetorical analysis of the 'Leader of the free world', Donald Trump, using 15 logical fallacies within 3 minutes: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w2CxDu7jiyE.

The point of ScrutiNews, and a major attraction to users, is that through exposure to well constructed arguments, scrutiny methodologies and open-mindedly fair critique, they will become masters of argumentation techniques, able to present their own thoughts much more convincingly in everyday discourse.

People, Concepts, Themes, and Arguments:

There will be people, concepts, themes, and arguments which come up time and time again in news stories. ScrutiNews will tag and categorise these as entities which can be scrutinised on their own merits/demerits so that we build up an understanding of them and how they relate to the stories they are involved with, giving us a more rounded perspective interrelating parts.

We can provide sub analysis, for example under the 'People' category, we can try to understand a person's personality, what drives them to act the way they do, and what bearing does this have on the events they're involved with?

For concepts and themes, we can crowdsource input into definitions, bringing clarity and highlighting ambiguities in viewpoints, so when the same concepts and themes reoccur in future stories, we have the foundations of rational discourse.

For arguments we can highlight their inherent logic, their premises, and conclusions.

Spectrum of Viewpoints:

"Tyranny is the deliberate removal of nuance" - Albert Maysles. Mass media reporting often deliberately removes nuance from a story, painting it in black-and-white terms according to their agenda or whatever bias held by their readership. ScrutiNews aims to expose the nuances.

One of the pieces of content produced by Scrutineers will be a taxonomy or categorisation of viewpoints around a particular issue. We want to illustrate the nuances, the shades of grey around an issue, analysing and understanding what justifications are used to support different viewpoints.

We should not shy away from looking at all viewpoints on an issue, from the potentially contentious far-right, or far-left views, to the mainstream perspectives, as well as what some may see as weird 'conspiracy theories'. Exploring range of 'reality tunnels' people apply to reach their view of the truth.

Viewpoint Profiling and Aggregation:

The job of ScrutiNews is to explore the perspectives and understand the justifications people use to support their beliefs, and expose the evidence, or lack thereof, in their justifications. After creating the spectrum of opinion, mentioned in the previous section, it would be interesting to take votes from users on where they feel they sit on the spectrum.

Self-voted alignment with specific viewpoints could be aggregated to wider populations to assess public opinion and sentiment.

Rate the Scrutiny, not the Person:

Scrutiny and commentary will be anonymised when initially published, so users will vote and rate on the accuracy and usefulness of the contribution, rather than due to a liking or disliking of the person behind the contribution. Their identities will be revealed after the passage of a certain amount of time (to be determined, e.g. unveiling a contributor's identity after one day of anonymity, or one week). Anyone proven to be secretly revealing their identity prior to unveiling would be penalised.

This would be a unique feature with interesting consequences. No longer are we led by the popular or loudest voice, but by an impartial assessment of the most accurate or interesting voice, giving unknown or new contributors as much weight and power as the more established ones. It is the assessment and the argument that wins.

Highly Shareable Summary Content:

The output of all the news filtering and Scrutineering will be concise and easily understandable snapshots of a news item which can be shared across social media platforms. Whenever a debate on social media gets out of hand, abusive, or just plain stupid, a 'share' from ScrutiNews will provide facts, evidence, analysis of alternative viewpoints and clarity. Social sharing of trusted high-quality content would be the catalyst for exponential interest and support for the ScrutiNews platform.

Broadcast Video Content:

Video content may also be considered as a means of making the daily scrutinised news events both a highly accessible and a highly shareable phenomenon. ScrutiNews could provide multiple channels on video sharing websites such as YouTube and DTube for Video Journalists to report on the day's scrutinised events. People watch a ScrutiNews video round-up of how the day's news was reported, highlighting the truths, and untruths.

Ratings 'Badges' for Source Content Providers:

Publications of integrity, who adhere to a more principled journalism, who strive for the truth, would have the option of displaying a ScrutiNews rating for individual articles and the publication as a whole. This would be a bold step by a news outlet but adds an extra dimension of reassurance that they are treating their readers with respectful decency, rather than idiots, solely as cannon fodder for their advertisers.

Pearls of Wisdom:

Whenever a user illuminates an issue through inspired insight, or concisely describes a difficult concept, it may be nominated by users as a Pearl of Wisdom, making it visible and available in the future when the issue or concept is relevant to a Story.

Aim of all Features:

The whole aim of the ScruitiNews platform is to strip out bias, bullshit, ambiguities, and complications from news items and distil them down into chunks of analysis so that everyday people have access to clear and concise analysis on the important events of the day, improving people's awareness of how to critically filter information, and exposing the credibility of journalists, media outlets, and information provided on the web.

5. Technology and Development:

5.1 Technology Stack Considerations:

a) Cryptocurrency Micropayments Token:

- Use something like the Ethereum ERC-20 token for ICO and for the platform's economic eco-system? Whatever platform is chosen, it must be able to deal with micropayments as incentives, e.g. think of the Steemit blogging website and the STEEM currency. See https://steemit.com/ and https://steem.io/

- The first thing to tackle would be the creation of a basic application to track contributors inputs via a simple Ethereum smart contract. This would be conceived as a fair way to track individual inputs into the project so that rewards, such as the allocation of tokens between the team following the ICO, can be dealt with fairly and transparently.

b) A Decentralised Platform:

- Consider practicalities and benefits of building the whole platform as a Decentralised Application (dApp) vs a traditional Centralised platform using the likes of PHP (E.g. Laravel Lumen 'API first' approach or NodeJS) and JavaScript based front-end (e.g. Vue / React). Perhaps the pre-ICO prototype would be centralised, with a plan to move to a decentralised model once dApps technology matures?

- Consider IPFS (Inter-Planetary File System) for distributed, permanent, high performance file storage management with no single point of failure. The platform could be data heavy (e.g. storage of all feed inputs, Scrutineer and user activity around news feeds). Selection of the best database storage and retrieval solutions would be of paramount importance. Note that a dApp built with IPFS could avoid censorship by repressive regimes, because arguably the need for a news Scrutineering app is a 'life or death' issue in oppressive countries.

c) Marketing website for project and ICO launch.

- The expectation is usually a single page app website, very fancy, very slick. For examples, see the websites for forthcoming ICOs - https://tokenmarket.net/ico-calendar/upcoming

5.2 Collaboration and PR Tools:

A common range of on-line tools are typically used by projects in the cryptocurrency sphere:

- GitHub for collaboration and version control: https://github.com/ScrutiNews
- A lightweight development project management tool to manage work into individual 'sprintable' project boards. A Trello Team has been created at - https://trello.com/scrutinews
- Slack for collaboration and chat. Already created at - https://scrutinews.slack.com/
- Telegram for ICO PR and chat
- A well managed and frequently updated Reddit channel for community building

6. Guiding Principles:

We will strive for elegance, simplicity, inclusiveness, honesty, and transparency in the way we go about building the platform. These are nice, warm, and fuzzy words so what do they mean in reality? A set of guiding principles should be defined so that we have something to pull us back to when things go awry. Our principles should be the antithesis of the world we are looking to scrutinise. Look at how political discourse is done, how mass media can lie and manipulate, how social media stirs up hatred, and do the opposite.

Our guiding principles should guide us in the way we code, the way we communicate with each other and the outside world, and the way we do dispute resolution. If we are to honestly scrutinise and critique broadcast content, we should put ourselves beyond suspicion in the way we conduct our affairs.

Open Source?

Can this project be done as an open source project, gaining the benefit of mass collaboration, while still maintaining the commercial viability should the source code be forked to launch competitors? If the project, as a whole, should not be open sourced, could it be broken down into open source modules?

7. Team:

ScrutiNews will be a collaborative effort, with some aspects completely open source.

What kind of Contributors Would the Project Need?
- Skilled developers / project managers / business and marketing types
- Blockchain / Crypto enthusiasts
- People interested in current affairs, journalism, and the general state of the world
- Academics, 'thought-leaders', or just intelligent and honest pursuers of knowledge - especially those involved in the scientific process, logic, critical thinking and argumentation, as well as political thinking and philosophy in its purest sense (love of knowledge). Those motivated by truth finding, free speech, and understanding the world as it is.
- Supporters – People who love the idea of the project and want to follow from the sidelines, perhaps dipping in occasionally when they feel they have something to offer.

For Developers, this will be an opportunity to work with cutting edge technologies, create something unique and worthwhile, and own a slice of the action. The first project will be to create a lightweight and open-source 'Project Rewards Tool', as described below. This will be a useful way to 'try out' the approach to working as a team, as well as for many people our first exposure to the Ethereum platform (https://www.ethereum.org/) and Smart Contracts which will probably be written in Solidity (https://solidity.readthedocs.io/en/develop/).

Project Rewards Tool: Rewards for Developers and Other Contributors:
An allocation will be made to participants of the project (e.g. Software development and associated activities) on a pre-agreed 'per contribution' basis.

As mentioned elsewhere in this proposal, one way of ensuring this is applied fairly would be to create a smart contract token (e.g. a DevToken using Ethereum) with an arbitrary supply (say 100,000) and use the supply to reward delivery of code or input of effort on a points basis (say 1 point of work = 10 tokens). Points and 'bounties' would be pre-agreed for all activities (Architecting, Design, Development, Code Review, QA, Project Management, Marketing etc...). DevTokens accrued during the pre-ICO phase will determine one's allocation of the ICO token when launched.

Code repositories have been created for building the Project Rewards Tool:

- API: https://github.com/ScrutiNews/project-rewards-api

- User Interface: https://github.com/ScrutiNews/project-rewards-ui

- Smart Contracts: https://github.com/ScrutiNews/project-rewards-contracts

A Trello board is set up to manage the tool development at: https://trello.com/scrutinews

A slack channel **#projects-rewards-tool** has been created at https://scrutinews.slack.com

8. Business Considerations:

8.1 Funding and Proposed ICO:

The inputs to any venture are labour and capital. It is hoped that labour will initially come from enthusiastic and talented colleagues, or contacts we make along the way, leading to capital investment via an ICO (Initial Coin Offering - see https://cointelegraph.com/explained/ico-explained). The ICO will create funds to reward the enthusiasm of the early contributors of labour inputs and create a viable framework for continued product development.

This will start as a bootstrapped project for building a prototype, with any minimal funding requirements provided by those key participants with access to funds. The ICO will provide an allocation for ongoing funding according to a roadmap, complemented by a subscriptions and syndication based revenue model (E.g. Subscribers to the platform and feed services).

A successful ICO will require a competent and believable team, a realistic and motivating roadmap, a well written whitepaper, a secure and properly constructed Smart Contract for collecting ICO funds, a transparent and principled approach to governance, and an authentic voice in everything we do to create excellent public relations.

Some ICOs have raised a huge amount of funds, capitalising on the excitement and exuberance of the cryptocurrency scene. It's common to see ICOs reaching several $million in a very short time.

8.2 Business and Revenue Models:

It is envisioned that ScrutiNews would launch as a private commercial organisation, with the aim of becoming commercially viable through a range of possible revenue models.

a) Subscription Revenues:

- A premium subscription service would provide users with an enhanced experience over guest users. For example, the Guest User experience will be interrupted with requests to screen and categorise incoming feeds.

b) Licensing / Syndicating ScrutiNews content:

- The re-use of ScrutiNews output via licensing/syndicating to third parties. Should a mainstream news organisation wish to use our content, there would be a licensing fee.

c) Scrutiny 'bounties' offered to review content:

- When a content creator, such as the marketing/PR division of a company, wants to communicate to its audience in a sincere and authentic voice, it may wish to run its content through the Scrutineers to reveal any unintended holes in its communication. The bounty would be a fee denominated in the ScrutiNews cryptocurrency token. The higher the bounty offered, the more attention from Scrutineers as they compete to provide the best scrutiny.

- A possible use of the 'bounty' concept could be where a media outlet, particularly proud of a published article, pays to have it thoroughly scrutinised, thereby enhancing its audience appeal, or pays to have a rival's article run through the scrutiny mill in order to expose a lack of diligence.

d) Advertising:

- Advertising is a common revenue mechanism, however a platform aiming to reduce bias and manipulation should probably avoid advertising and remain completely impartial. Advertising as a source of revenue should only be considered if it does not create a conflict of interest and does not spoil the user experience.

8.3 Target Market:

"There are three classes of people: Those who see. Those who see when they are shown. Those who do not see." - Leonardo Da Vinci

The Leonado Da Vinci quote conveniently segments the potential user market for us:

a) Those who see:

- These are the Scrutineers, intelligent and erudite people interested in sharing their insight to improve broader understanding and public discourse. Let's say 20% of the user audience.

b) Those who see when they are shown:

- This will make up the clear majority of the use base, let's say 80%. These are people who want to learn, who want to improve their understanding of the world, who know they're often being lied to and manipulated by the media and want to filter fact from fiction.

c) Those who do not see:

- Those who do not see will experience ScrutiNews when they are being abusive or idiotic in online debates. An enlightened ScrutiNews user will post a clear 'shareable' ScrutiNews summary of the knowns and unknowns, and the spectrum of viewpoints on the given issue and hopefully the prejudiced and inaccurate line of attack will be shown up for what it is, and the culprit will back down. Of course, we don't want to attract mindless idiots, entrenched in their bitter prejudices, with their mind closed to alternative viewpoints. Such users should be ostracised from the platform, called out whenever they engage in unwanted behaviour and removed from the platform.

- The optimistic stance is that people can change over time, given the will and the right environment, and that the proportion of 'Those who do not see' will decrease within the more enlightened culture of public discourse that ScrutiNews wishes to promote.

9. Roadmap:

This will be an evolving concept which will grow through collaborative thinking and feedback. Of course we have to start with baby steps, but the roadmap is needed to ensure those baby steps take us to where we want to go.

Key items could include:

- Distributed architecture, avoiding attacks and encouraging availability in repressive regimes.
- Internationalisation, multi-languages - it's useful to see how the same story is reported in different countries.
- Cryptocurrency token based economic system to support and incentivise activity on the platform.
- A ScrutiNews 'Foundation' to ensure principled governance so that the platform is guaranteed independent, transparent, and incorruptible.
- Guides, tutorials, and tools enabling detailed scrutiny and analysis.
- Meta-analysis and statistics on the credibility of media platforms and individual journalists.
- APIs for syndicated distribution of ScrutiNews daily outputs.
- Expand scrutiny methodology to any other applicable content (chapters in books, blogs, Wikipedia pages, documentaries, interviews with politicians, advertising, political manifestos etc.).
- ScrutiNews video media channels, providing high quality daily synopsis and analysis.
- Timestamped immutable Blockchain storage of cryptographically hashed articles to avoid articles disappearing down an Orwellian 'memory hole' where text is altered, and old versions destroyed.

Note: As per the intro to this section, I don't have all the answers – this document is about getting thoughts and ideas down onto paper so that with other contributors we can co-create the roadmap.

10. Conclusions:

I hope this proposal covers the essence of what I'm trying to achieve, in a motivating and sincere way. There may be many holes in the thinking and the plan may seem a little naïve or grandiose in parts, but what the hell, we're not here for ever so may as well go 'all-in' with something bold. If Elon Musk can make electric sports cars and fire off into space with re-usable rockets, then surely this isn't beyond the capabilities of a group of intelligent people, and enthusiastic backers, collaborating on something truly worthwhile...

Why do this?
Important decisions are made every day upon the perceived truth of a situation. Despite information being more available to everyday people all over the world than it ever before, it is accompanied by vast increases in dis-information, propaganda, rumour and sensationalism.

People often lack the critical thinking skills to navigate through the nonsense, and find the truth for themselves. They end up with polarised false beliefs, which are stoked and reinforced by the media. This is dangerous, for individual welfare, the conviviality of society and the future of the world.

Undertaking a project to discern clarity and truth from the chaos and confusion pedalled by providers of information is arguably one of the noblest causes of our time. It's taking responsibility for the state of the word and our part in improving it for future generations. This is a very big 'why' which should be a huge motivation involved in those contributing and participating.

Call to Action:
This proposal talks about possibility and potential, but implies a call to action for people to participate, generate more ideas, and support it, so it becomes manifest.

- Ask John D for an invite to Slack: https://scrutinews.slack.com
- Follow the project on GitHub and ask John D for an invite: https://github.com/ScrutiNews
- Request an invitation to the ScrutiNews Trello Team from John D: https://trello.com/scrutinews
- Pass any ideas, critique or suggestions to John D

John D's 'Why?':

I was attracted to programming as a tool to make something brilliant, something world-impacting. However, the reality has been to work on arguably trivial commercial products, of little importance in the progress of humanity or any other major project of personal self-fulfilment. Taking on traditional news media and social media is like simultaneously fighting a Leviathan and a Behemoth, but as mythology teaches us, the dragons are always guarding the gold, and the gold in this project would be the enourmous sense of pride and self-satisfaction from achieving something so meaningful. I would like to find a way to make this project my full time job, and bring a few others along with me so that we could enjoy the satisfaction of working on something truly worthwhile, pulling journalism and online debate out of the gutter to elevate public discourse so collectively we make better decisions for the world we inhabit.

Damn, this all sounds a bit ambitious, but what the hell... *"To live is to suffer, to survive is to find some meaning in the suffering."* - Friedrich Nietzsche

11. References:

Some Pre-existing 'Fact Checking' or 'Truth Seeking' Websites:

- Full Fact: https://fullfact.org/ A UK based fact checking charity

- Snopes: https://www.snopes.com/ US Private Fact Checking Firm

- Fact Check: https://www.factcheck.org/ A US based fact checking organisation

- Truth or Fiction: https://www.truthorfiction.com A US based site critiquing news claims

- Courage Foundation: https://www.couragefound.org Supports those who risk life and liberty to make significant contributions to the historical record.

Media Ownership & Control:

- UK: Who owns the Media: http://www.mediareform.org.uk/

Worldwide Freedom of Press:

- World Press Freedom Index: https://rsf.org/en/ranking

- Worldwide Audit of Freedom of Press: http://www.worldaudit.org/presstable.html

ICO (Initial Coin Offering)

- ICO Explained: https://cointelegraph.com/explained/ico-explained

Understanding Human Bias:

- Logical Fallacies: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_fallacies

- Cognitive Biases: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_cognitive_biases

Press Regulators (UK):

- Independent Press Standards Organisation (IPSO): https://www.ipso.co.uk/

- IMPRESS: https://impress.press/

Reading List:

I have read or dipped into the resources below which have had some influence on why I want to undertake this project. My opinions are inevitably biased as a result, regardless of how objective I may intend to be...

- Nineteen Eighty-Four: George Orwell - https://www.amazon.co.uk/dp/B002RI991O

- Flat Earth News: Nick Davies - https://www.amazon.co.uk/dp/B00NPN5BT4

- The True Story of Fake News: How Mainstream Media Manipulates Millions: Mark Dice - https://www.amazon.co.uk/dp/B0774LKXW9

- Propaganda: Edward Bernays - https://www.amazon.co.uk/dp/B0097D76MG

- The Art of The Argument: Western Civilization's Last Stand: Stefan Molyneux - https://www.amazon.co.uk/dp/B0756QYZ26

- Fundamentals of Critical Argumentation: Douglas Walton - https://www.amazon.co.uk/Fundamentals-Critical-Argumentation-Reasoning/dp/0521530202

- The Crowd: A Study of the Popular Mind - Gustave Le Bon - https://www.amazon.co.uk/dp/B019GDPMHM

Appendix I – Projects Rewards Tool

Intro:

Here are specifications for a way of tracking people's contributions towards a project or a speculative venture so that participants know their contributions are safely recorded, in a fair way, so that they can be appropriate recognised, paid, or rewarded when the project achieves its aims.

This should be the ideal mini-project for a developer to get their teeth into doing practical applications of Blockchain, Cryptocurrency and Smart Contract technologies.

Use Case:

The primary Use Case for this tool is to recognise contributors to a speculative prototype project, primarily software developers, so that if the prototype becomes a commercially viable product, the contributors can be duly compensated for their support.

High Level Specifications:

- The requirement is to build an online tool to track input (e.g. labour) into a project via cryptocurrency token payments, providing a transparent, immutable and secure method of accounting, resistant to fraud or hacks.

- The tokens could have real value, e.g. backed by an existing cryptocurrency, or they could have nominal value, just tokens representing effort, which may serve some other future purpose (e.g. converted into shares in a company).

- The tool will therefore offer a web based front end, which is a window into the Ethereum Blockchain, with the ability to call certain methods on the Ethereum Smart contract.

- The tool will have basic Invoice Approval and Remittances functionality, as per an Accounts Payable system

- The tool will allow a user to view transaction histories, linking an Ethereum transaction ID to a specific invoice, for a specific piece of work.

- The tool will provide User Login and Authentications and allow the specification and assignment of different Roles within the system, giving permissions to use desired functionality.

Questions/Investigation - Smart Contracts for full Accounts Payable?

- Should the whole payments request and approval functionality take place via Smart Contracts, with the UI simply providing a window into the Blockchain records.

- Or should the approval functionality be in an offline DB and only the approved transactions via Smart Contract?

- The answer to the above may depend on Gas costs (e.g. if the cost of processing every single request to the Ethereum network is too much of an overhead for a full accounts payable system)

Proposed Implementation:

The below is just one possibility on how to go about implementing this project. Better suggestions are welcome.

Build the dApp (Distributed Application):
1. Create the Ethereum Smart Contracts:

- Create the main token contract, using ERC20 Standards (https://github.com/ethereum/EIPs/blob/master/EIPS/eip-20.md), exposing methods to do 'Accounts Payable' functionality (invoice submission, invoice approvals, remittances)

- Once the Smart Contracts are up and running, we could start using them for this 'Projects Rewards Tool' project by interacting with the contracts via the Ethereum Mist Wallet (https://github.com/ethereum/mist/releases), MetaMask (https://metamask.io/), or simply through an Ethereum GETH Command Line Console (https://github.com/ethereum/go-ethereum/wiki/Command-Line-Options)

- The Ethereum Smart Contracts can be built using Solidity (https://solidity.readthedocs.io/en/develop/), See YouTube Tutorial (https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCaWes1eWQ9TbzA695gI_PtA)

- The Smart Contracts can be built and tested using Truffle Framework (http://truffleframework.com/) and Remix IDE (https://remix.ethereum.org/)

- For many, this will be their first time working with Ethereum Smart Contracts. We will inevitably run into problems, but this will help us to learn, refine and improve

- One important thing to learn would be the likely cost of Ethereum Gas to record and manage transactions as we scale (see Gas Price (https://etherscan.io/chart/gasprice) and Gas Station Calculators (https://ethgasstation.info/)).

- A repos has been created for storing smart contracts at: https://github.com/ScrutiNews/project-rewards-contracts

2. Next, we could build a fancy front-end User Interface (UI) to interface with the Smart Contracts:

- Should we use the Truffle Framework (http://truffleframework.com/) or build our own using a more traditional technical stack combined with the Web3.js (https://github.com/ethereum/web3.js/) JavaScript API tool?

- The fancy UI will make it easy for people to manage invoice submission, approvals and remittances, as well as interrogation of the Ethereum Blockchain to do things like view balances and transactions history. It wall also manage user login/authentication and roles, as well as providing customisable guideline information and configuration options.

3. Tinker with other Smart Contract Platforms to evaluate whether Ethereum is the most suitable for our needs:

- For Micro-Payments, maybe something like IOTA (https://iota.org/) or NANO/Raiblocks (https://raiblocks.net/) would serve us better, or perhaps we should look at NEO (https://neo.org/) where Smart Contracts can be written in any language? While Ethereum is the most mature and wildly used Blockchain platform, there are a number of platforms to consider.

Contributors & Legals:

Some kind of legal document/agreement would need to be created to ensure our mutual obligations are contractually understood and agreed. Perhaps the signing of agreements can also be done via Smart Contracts?

Lower Level Requirements, Details, Thoughts, Questions:

How will the tool be used in practice? E.g. What will be the rewards process/workflow?

- Pre-agree a price for a work ticket (e.g. through bidding or through some other price setting method)

- Pre-agree conditions, payments, and penalties

- Do the work and meet the conditions

- Submit Invoice (e.g. this could be automated via a git-hook - the commit reference may contain the required ticket info to trigger the appropriate invoice)

- Invoice approval process

- Immediate remittance via Ethereum Blockchain.

- Note: would need some way of requesting payment back from the Payee in the event of overpayments / mistakes; would every micro-contribution be invoiced, or would they be done in weekly batches?

Areas of functionality:

- User creation, Logins and Authentication

- Roles: Admin; CanAuthoriseRemittance; CanSubmitInvoice; CanApproveInvoice

- Guides to Payments

- A means of pre-agreeing and setting the value of a discrete piece of work (e.g. a ticket) - assume that it is only payable once it has met some sort of acceptance criteria.

- Transaction views, for users and admin.

- Configuration Area

- Links to project pages, what we're actually working on etc.

- Integrations (e.g. git-hooks)

- Notifications & confirmation emails

- Upload evidence of work?

- View everyone's contributions or just your own? Privacy / secrecy / Transparency?

Consider the above as a work-in-progress, these are ideas only. More fleshing out to be done.